

Montezuma



National Wildlife Refuge Complex

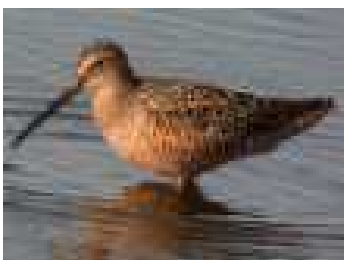
Are We Giving Waterbirds What They Really Need for Survival? A Study of Regional Wetland Impoundments Aims to Find Out

Background & Purpose of Study

Staff at National Wildlife Refuges often manipulate water levels in wetlands to provide habitat for a variety of wildlife.

The purpose of this wetland management often aims to:

- ? mimic the natural processes that influence wetland habitats
- ? alter the timing of natural processes to meet annual life-cycle needs of certain wildlife
- ? provide the best habitat for migrating waterbirds



Wetland management at

Montezuma NWR includes drawing down and maintaining water levels in impoundments to create shallow (3-9") and deep (12-24") water & mudflats for migrating waterfowl, shorebirds & other waterbirds, as well as to facilitate invasive species management.

Most wetlands can be drawn down to meet the needs for the northward migration OR the southward migration, but rarely both.

In order to better understand how spring vs. summer/fall drawdowns affect the quality of waterbird habitat, as well as use of impoundments by shorebirds, waterfowl, and wading birds, Montezuma is participating in a large-scale research study.

This 3-year study is a bi-regional study, including 23 refuges across the Mid-West & North East.

We need to coordinate regional management efforts to ensure quality habitat is available for migrating waterbirds.

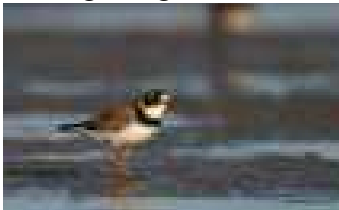


Study Objectives

- ? Analyze the effects of spring vs. summer/fall drawdowns on waterbird habitat
- ? Assess the potential to provide habitat for various groups of waterbirds
- ? Develop tools and protocols for monitoring and decision-making

How it'll be Done at Montezuma

Benning Marsh & May's Point Pool have historically been kept at high water levels until mid-to late July. A slow drawdown on each pool beginning in July would provide mudflats for fall migrating shorebirds to feed on insects and other invertebrates. Re-flooding before the first freeze date would ready the area for migrating waterfowl.



This year, Benning Marsh will experience a summer/fall drawdown & a spring drawdown for the following 2 years; May's Point Pool will experience a spring drawdown this year & a summer/fall drawdown for the following 2 years.

Benning Marsh and May's Point Pool will be re-flooded for waterfowl migration.

What This Means for Birders

2005

Following the research study protocol, May's Point Pool experienced a spring drawdown this year. This may lead to a significant change in habitat as compared to previous years and may yield less of a chance at seeing shorebirds.

Benning Marsh should still be a good spot to view shorebirds this year since the drawdown will still occur in July.

2006 & 2007

Benning Marsh will experience the spring drawdown, possibly leading to less of a chance to see shorebirds there. During these two years, May's Point Pool will employ the summer/fall drawdown in July and should be good for shorebird viewing.

Shorebird habitat is being enhanced toward the beginning of the Wildlife Drive for further viewing opportunities.

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